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MUNCIE FREE PRESS

Disaster Assistance Centers in Three Southern Indiana Counties to open Wednesday

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - Governor Mitch Daniels said today the state will partner with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to operate three disaster assistance centers in Harrison, Jefferson and Jennings counties beginning Wednesday.

The sites will be open Wednesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time and will offer services from FEMA, the Department of Workforce Development, Department of Insurance and the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA).

In northwestern Indiana, the six assistance centers that have been providing services since last week will be open for their final days Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time.

This includes distribution of emergency food stamps.

Each of the three new locations in southern Indiana is at an existing FSSA office. The locations are:

Harrison County

2201 Concord Avenue, Suite 120

Corydon

Jefferson County

493 West Hutchinson Lane, Suite A

Madison

Jennings County

1171 North State Street

North Vernon

The governor also has asked the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to allow emergency food stamp distribution for victims in the three counties. The state has not received a response as of Monday afternoon, but if approval is granted, emergency

food stamps will be provided at the same locations for seven days. Disaster food stamps are for citizens impacted by the recent flooding. Individuals will be required to show identification and sign an affidavit indicating they have suffered damage from the severe weather.

The governor was notified Friday that President George W. Bush declared that a major disaster exists for Harrison, Jefferson and Jennings counties and approved federal individual assistance for affected residents as a result of severe weather that began on September 12 because of the remnants of Hurricane Ike.

Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties received approval for federal individual assistance on September 23. Additional counties may also be added as part of the major disaster determination as damage assessments are completed. They include Clark, Crawford, Dearborn, Floyd, Jasper, Martin, Newton, Perry, Scott, Spencer and Switzerland.

All centers will have representatives from FEMA, and computers and phones will be available for flood victims to complete (FEMA) applications. It is not necessary to come to a disaster center to fill out a FEMA application. Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the three counties can register online at <http://www.fema.gov/assistance> or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. local time.

FEMA assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

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Post-Tribune

Lake Station flood evacuees upset about move to hotel

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/lake/1192504.lsfflood.article>)

September 30, 2008

BY [KAREN SNELLING](#) Post-Tribune staff writer

GARY -- Nearly 80 Lake Station residents forced from their homes by flooding along Deep River are now calling a Gary casino hotel home.

The flood victims were moved into the Majestic Star Casino Hotel on Saturday after they spent two weeks in a temporary shelter the American Red Cross set up at the Lake Station Boys & Girls Club.

The Indiana Office of Disaster Recovery is picking up the hotel bill.

"The hotel is not a long-term solution," Andy Miller, director of the disaster recovery office, said. "The goal is to get them into other housing."

Miller said officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency are working with the displaced Lake Station residents to find permanent housing.

For his part, William Conklin said he's anxious to leave the hotel.

"We feel like we've been deserted here," the 40-year-old Lake Station resident said.

"They put us up here with no food or transportation," he said.

Although Conklin and his neighbors were given food stamps or food vouchers, they say they have no way to get to a grocery store.

Bill Schmitt, a father of five, also said no arrangements have been made so his children can continue to attend classes in the River Forest school district.

"They just dropped us off and said, 'See you later,' " Schmitt said.

At the shelter, he said a school bus was sent each day so children could get to school. He said the shelter also offered a regular routine that allowed people to get to work and share meals.

Lake Station Mayor Keith Soderquist said he's trying to get families with children relocated to hotels in Portage or Merrillville to make it easier for them to attend school.

Ideally, according to Miller, it should take no more than four weeks for disaster victims to be moved into new homes or rental units.

Schmitt, meanwhile, wonders why local and state officials would house flood victims in a hotel that looks out onto Lake Michigan.

"I'm a flood victim that gets to look out the window at a big puddle of water," he said. "I don't want to see water right now."

Contact Karen Snelling at 648-3106 or ksnelling@post-trib.com

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Post-Tribune

Flood-damaged streets to reopen soon

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/lake/1192567,hbstreets.article>)

September 30, 2008

BY [KAREN SNELLING](#) Post-Tribune staff writer

HOBART -- Two east-west routes closed due to flood damage earlier this month will reopen within 10 days, officials said Monday.

Repairs to the Third Street Bridge over Lake George, just west of Main Street, are expected to be completed by Friday, opening traffic lanes on Third Street, Hobart Public Works Superintendent Wayne Snider said.

Crews from Ellis Construction, based in Gary, are expected to restore the sidewalks and street approaches to the bridge which buckled after the lake reached a record depth of 22 feet 9 inches.

The Lake County Highway Department, which is responsible for maintaining bridges throughout the county, will spend \$100,000 to complete the repair work, Hobart City Engineer Stephan Truchan said.

Meanwhile, the city is splitting a \$100,000 bill to repair a collapsed culvert on 73rd Avenue with the Lake County Drainage Board. Hobart-based Boyd Construction is rebuilding the drainage line that led to the road closure.

The road will reopen on Oct. 8, city officials said.

Truchan said a portion of 61st Avenue -- the 61st Avenue and Colorado Street intersection -- will open to eastbound traffic next month.

In April, the city closed 61st Avenue between Liverpool Road and Colorado Street.

Contact Karen Snelling at 648-3106 or ksnelling@post-trib.com

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Porter County flood one-stop shop open in Valpo

BY TIMES STAFF | Monday, September 29, 2008

VALPARAISO | The one-stop disaster assistance center at 152 Indiana Ave. here will remain open and in full operation with representatives of state and federal agencies through tomorrow, Tuesday, Sept. 30.

The disaster center opened Friday in the Family and Social Services Administration office with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the state Department of Workforce Development, Department of Health and Department of Insurance. It will continue to be open until 8 p.m. today and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Representatives at these locations can assist with questions about social services, including emergency food stamps, unemployment insurance, insurance policies and other issues. Residents who suffered damage in the mid-September storms can apply for FEMA assistance at the center.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said FEMA representatives will remain at the location until demand for their services dwindle.

The other agencies will still be available beyond Tuesday to assist people, but not at that site, said Erickson. Those still needing assistance or to ask questions will have to contact the agencies via telephone or their web sites.

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Post-Tribune

Flood victims work to find relief

(http://www.post-trib.com/1192503_vfema.article)

September 30, 2008

By Teresa Auch Schultz Post-Tribune staff writer

VALPARAISO -- The line at the local Family and Social Services office snaked around the parking lot Monday as several hundred people waited to apply for flood assistance.

As bad as the line was, though, many people said they came from Lake County because all the offices there were worse.

"This is a piece of cake," Tanya Davis of Gary said as she waited near the end of the line.

FSSA help centers in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties have been hit with people looking for help with flooding, Lauren Auld, director of media relations for FSSA, said.

Offices in the three counties had accepted about 6,100 applications for assistance on Thursday and Friday. Auld said she wouldn't be surprised if that number was up to 12,000 through Monday.

Many people, like Davis, came to the Valparaiso office after not having any luck at any of the three offices in Lake County. Mary Allen of Gary said she started out Monday driving to the one in Lake Station only to be turned away. She then tried Gary and Munster, again with no luck.

Allen said her home was flooded and she "just wants some help."

Another woman from Gary, who declined to give her name, said she had been in line for about three hours, but it wasn't that bad because it moved at a decent pace and people in line talked to each other.

She, too, had also tried going to the Lake County offices on Friday and Saturday.

"It's a mess in Lake Station," the woman said. "You have to get up at 5 a.m."

Auld said the FSSA was trying to keep up with the demand and had sent extra workers to the Northwest Indiana locations. FSSA is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other groups so that people can go to just one place to apply for assistance, she said.

Although FEMA will be in the region as long as it needs to be, Auld said, people can apply for emergency food stamps only until 8 p.m. Wednesday.

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Purdue researchers to assess impact of damage from Midwest floods

Posted on September 29, 2008

By Phillip Fiorini, Purdue University News Service

Filed under [Purdue News](#), 66 views

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Researchers from Purdue University's Division of Construction Engineering Management and the Purdue Homeland Security Institute are working with local, state and federal agencies to assess the economic, social and psychological impact of this summer's extensive flooding throughout the Midwest.

Through the National Science Foundation project, the researchers will canvass three communities to collect data and distribute surveys to determine the extent of flood damage and the toll it is having on communities.

Residents in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri are still grappling with an estimated \$10 billion in damage from the flooding, which killed 24 people and injured another 150 people in June and July. Initially, Purdue's six-month study will focus on some of the hardest hit communities - Cedar Rapids, Iowa; St. Louis; and Terre Haute, Ind.

"The main reason for much of the widespread flood damage was infrastructure failures," said Eric Dietz, director of Discovery Park's Homeland Security Institute. "The collapse of a bridge, road, home, business, hospital, church or other critical structure can devastate a community, creating social and emotional stresses that can have lasting effects on people's lives."

Researchers, led by civil engineering professor Mark Hastak, will conduct personal interviews and distribute surveys to those living in and around the flooded communities. Survey answers

will provide demographic information about the residents, how long they have lived in the community, and the infrastructure and businesses that are a part of their regular daily lives.

Researchers will work closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Red Cross and other local agencies involved with infrastructure planning and maintenance, Hastak said.

Congress has earmarked \$10 billion for Midwest flood relief. Flood damage in Indiana is expected to reach \$1 billion. Estimates are far higher in Iowa, where communities such as Cedar Rapids had 1,300 city blocks under water, forcing the evacuation of 24,000 residents.

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